



Jim
Honeyford

State Senator • 15th District

Olympia Report

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JANUARY 26, 2007

Welcome to the 2007 Legislative Session! I'm happy to bring back my Olympia Report, which will be mailed to you every two weeks.

This year, I'm proud to serve as the ranking Republican member on two committees – the Senate Water, Energy and Telecommunications Committee and the Senate Consumer Protection and Housing Committee.

We have a lot of work to do in this 105-day session which began on the 8th of January. To help you keep track of what's going on, here are some important dates:

- ❖ **Feb. 28:** Last day for the House and Senate standing committees to act on their own bills, except those necessary to implement budgets.
- ❖ **March 5:** Last day for the House and Senate fiscal committees to act on their own bills necessary to implement the budgets.
- ❖ **March 14:** Last day for the House and Senate to vote on their own bills, except those necessary to implement the budgets.
- ❖ **March 30:** Last day for the House and Senate standing committees to act on bills from the opposite chamber.
- ❖ **April 2:** Last day for the House and Senate fiscal committees to act on matters from the opposite chamber that are necessary to implement the budgets.
- ❖ **April 13:** Last day for the House and Senate to vote on bills from the opposite chamber, except those necessary to implement the budgets and bills in dispute between the chambers.
- ❖ **April 22:** Last day of the Legislative Session.

Senate gives farmers well deserved attention in the first few weeks of Session

Farming is the largest employer in our state and a major industry in our district. Despite this fact, farming doesn't always receive the attention it should in Olympia.

That's why I decided to begin this session by introducing several farming proposals. Three of these ideas have already received hearings in the Senate Agriculture and Rural Economic Development Committee. Here's a brief summary of my bills and a few others:

Senate Bill 5059 — Would lower the business and occupation tax rate for custom farmers to 0.2904 percent, the same preferential rate given to Boeing and most recently extended to the timber industry in 2006.

Senate Bill 5076 — Would help protect a farmer's right to change what he or she decides to farm without threat of a lawsuit. This proposal recognizes that if our farms are going to survive, they need the flexibility to adapt and change practices, if necessary. Without that flexibility, farmers are often forced to sell their land and farms could be turned into museum status.

Senate Bill 5077 — Would exempt propane fuel sold to farmers from the retail sales and use tax.

Senate Bill 5074 — Would divide Water Resource Inventory Area (WRIA) 29 into WRIA 29a and WRIA 29b in order to allow the eastern division to complete its planning and provide funding. The proposal would designate the White Salmon subbasin and everything east of it as WRIA 29b, with the remaining area as WRIA 29a. Watershed planning would be conducted separately for the two areas.

Senate Bill 5113 — Would allow barley straw, which can reduce the growth of algae, to be used for water clarification without a state waste discharge permit if certain conditions are met.

Senate Bill 5056 — Would extend the small farm and direct marketing program within the state Department of Agriculture. The program assists small farms by awarding grants to local direct marketing projects, including farmers markets.

Hear my "Strengthening the Right to Farm" podcast: <http://src.leg.wa.gov/podcastcenter.htm>

(continued on next page)

Committee assignments:

- Consumer Protection & Housing, Ranking Member
- Water, Energy & Telecommunications, Ranking Member
- Ways & Means

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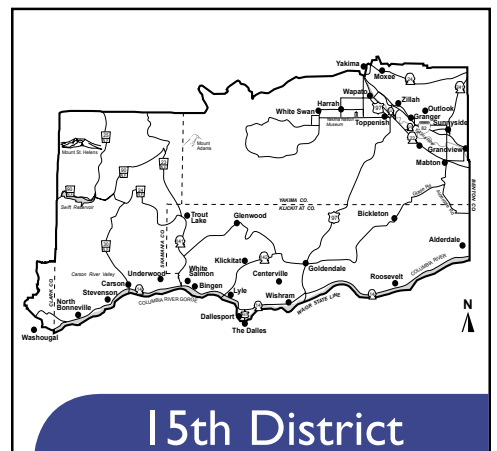
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Taxpayer Refund

In the coming days, I plan to offer a bill that proposes to give citizens a little tax relief. This bill will propose reducing the state property tax levy rate for the next two years, providing over \$500 million in tax relief.

With the state projected to have nearly a \$1.9 billion surplus, this proposal would give some of that money back into the pockets of working individuals across the state. The proposal is a one time only cost to the state and doesn't affect local funding.

Look for this bill next week!

Gambling Grows?

In a joint hearing of the Senate and House labor and commerce committees on Jan. 23, legislators listened to the details of a new gambling compact negotiated between the state Gambling Commission and the Spokane Tribe.

Under the compact, the Spokane Tribe would be granted permission to operate 4,700 gambling machines, with up to 1,500 terminals at each facility. In total, the tribe may operate five facilities. This is more than any other tribe in the state.

The tribe may also offer unlimited wagering at five gaming tables at one facility during 120 days per year. No other tribe has that privilege.

Approving Spokane's gambling agreement would dramatically expand gambling statewide. That is due to the most favored nation clauses of other tribes' compacts, which says other tribes must be given equal treatment upon request. During the hearing, the

Spokane Tribe indicated they would use the compact to begin pursuing off-reservation gaming.

The Gambling Commission will hold a public hearing on this compact on Feb. 8 in Olympia.

Gov. Gregoire has the final approval authority.

Issues to Watch

Senate Joint Resolution 8209 — A bill to create a state income tax, probably the most rejected idea in Washington state history.

Senate Bill 5335 — A bill to strike down Washington's law which defines marriage as a union between one man and one woman.

Salary Commission — The Senate Majority Leader lobbied the salary commission for pay raises for legislators before the Jan. 10 meeting of the Washington Citizens Commission on Salaries.

The commission adopted a draft plan for those raises to be presented in public hearings across the state over the next few weeks. The schedule is posted on the commission's Web site. The first public hearing is February 22 and the last public hearing is set for May 15.

You can learn more about the commission by visiting its Web site at: www.salaries.wa.gov.

Email Updates

If you prefer to receive these updates via email or would like to be removed from this list, please send me an email at Honeyford.Jim@leg.wa.gov or call my office at (360) 786-7684.

Please use this space for any comments, suggestions or problems you would like me to know about.
Or call the toll-free legislative hotline at 1-800-562-6000.



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